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Sir Samuel Argall

The First Englishman

at Mount Desert

By

William Otis Sawtelle
Sir Samuel Argall

THE FIRST ENGLISHMAN
AT MOUNT DESERT

A paper read before the Maine Historical Society,
October 25, 1923

by William Otis Sawtelle

(Excerpt from Sprague's Journal of Maine History Vol. 12, No. 4)
PROPOS of the appearance of a new book on New England history, written from a modern standpoint and embodying the results of careful and exhaustive research, a reviewer remarked:

"It is one of the privileges, as well as the duties of modern times that entails the rewriting of history. We have grown up in certain conceptions and it is not too much to assert that not we alone but many generations have shared those ideas. It is only recently that fresh research and wider understanding have brought about a different reading of history."

Since James Truslow Adams, in his Founding of New England, for this is the work which called forth the above comment, has upset not a few old ideas relating to many a colonial character, it occurred to me, that it might be of some interest to attempt a revision of the biography of Sir Samuel Argall, the English captain from Virginia, who, in 1613, broke up the French Jesuit colony which for a brief time occupied Fernald's Point on the south side of Mount Desert Island.

1 For an account of this mission see my Story of Saint Sauveur, this Journal, 9:101, a paper read before the Bangor Historical Society, April 6, 1921, originally published in the Bangor Commercial, April 15, and issued in pamphlet form for private circulation, 1921.

2 The earliest English record of Argall at Mount Desert is to be found in the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series (1554-1660), p. 15, as follows: Oct. 18/28 1613. H. de Montmorency Admiral of France to King James Complains of depredations committed upon some French subjects in Canada, called New France, by an English vessel the Treasurer, Capt. Argall. The English attacked a small settlement (petite habitation) made by permission of the King of France at the expense of the Marchioness of Guercheville, Lady of Honour to the Queen, killed many men, among them two Jesuits, and took two others prisoners into Virginia. The remainder of the men were put into a little skiff and abandoned to the mercy of the waters and the design has been thus ruined. Requests Justice for such inhumanities and King James' commands in three things: that the two Jesuit fathers be sent back in safety with the other prisoners; that the Marchioness have restitution for the loss of more than 100,000 livres; and that the Council or Society of Virginia explicitly declare the bounds of their country, it having been conceived that the disorders may have arisen through the neighborhood of the settlements. Reminds the King that the French have had possession of New France for more than 50 years. Hopes a prudent remedy may be found and a favourable answer returned through Mons. de Buisseaux, the French Ambassador. (Indorsed: French Corresp. France, 18 Oct., 1613.)
The site of Saint Sauveur is on the left of the entrance to the Sound, abreast the little schooner anchored near the position taken by Argall's ship, the Treasurer, during the attack upon the Jesuit mission, 1613. Here was the beginning of warfare in America, between two great European powers, to be ended by the Treaty of Paris, 1763, when France ceded Canada to England.
Today, there is at one's disposal a vast amount of material denied to those of a generation or so ago. Alexander Brown's collection of original documents contained in his Genesis of the United States and in his First Republic in America, has many references to Eastern Maine and Mount Desert; the publications of the Historical Society of Virginia are invaluable; and as for the Court Books of the Virginia Company, published by the Federal Government, from the originals in the Congressional Library, there are not superlatives enough in our language to adequately describe their importance.

Before referring to original sources, let us turn attention to several historical works from which the popular conception of Sir Samuel Argall has been derived.

Parkman, in his Pioneers of New France, has characterized the destruction of Saint Sauveur as "an obscure stroke of lawless violence," adding that Argall "whose violent and crafty character was offset by a gallant bearing and various traits of martial virtue, became Deputy-Governor of Virginia, and under a military code, ruled the colony with a rod of iron. . . . He enriched himself by extortion and wholesale peculation; and his audacious dexterity, aided by the countenance of the Earl of Warwick, . . . thwarted all efforts of the company to bring him to account."

Henry Cabot Lodge would have it that "Argall was a sea-captain of piratical tastes," and that he was a conspicuous figure during Dale's administration as chief magistrate of Virginia, because of the abduction of Pocahontas, and for "pillaging and burning the huts of French fishermen in Acadia," while Woodrow Wilson states that Argall "was no lover of the people he had come to govern, but a man chiefly bent upon serving his own fortune,—little better than a freebooter." In Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, John Fiske introduces "the self-seeking and unscrupulous Argall."

A book which is in many school libraries in this country, presents this picture of Samuel Argall to its readers:

"Argall is one of the most dramatic figures of that dramatic age—wily, energetic, rapacious, a human hawk, peering about for some prey to pounce upon. He was a trader, fisherman, intriguer, and a little of the buccaneer; ever going to and fro for something to profit by; ready to capture Indian girls, or burn settlements, or to 'run' a cargo of slaves. He performed this latter exploit, and was nearly the author of the introduction of slavery into America. . . . Argall's restless spirit

1 History of the English Colonies in America, p. 8.
2 History of the American People, 1: 55.
3 Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, 1: 183.
had carried him back to England after the Acadian business. There he intrigued with the Earl of Warwick, the head of the court party, and the result was that in 1617 he was sent to supersede Yeardley, with the title of Deputy Governor and Admiral of Virginia." This author, just quoted, would have it that Argall's Mount Desert expedition is "no more defensible than the expeditions of Morgan or any other marauder of the West Indies."  

Accounts of Samuel Argall as found in histories of Virginia are all surprisingly alike, which is to be expected since no writer appears to have questioned the authority of Stith, whose history was published in 1747. Stith's authority is none other than Sir Edwin Sandys, a bitter political enemy of Argall, whose entry in the minutes of the Virginia Council, under date of January 11, 1626, was accepted by this Virginian historian as statements of facts. This writing of Sandys might well be classed as campaign literature, country versus court party, and as an early example of political propaganda, I give it in full:

"Captain Argall all this time, was not negligent or forgetful of the grand End of his coming to Virginia but pushed his unrighteous Gains, by all imaginable Methods of Extortion and Oppression. For besides a multitude of Private Wrongs to particular persons he converted in a manner wholly to his own Use all possession whatsoever remained at that time belonging to the Publick; being the Fruits and Relicts of eighty thousand Pounds expence. So that he was loudly charged, with Many Offences in the Matter of State and Government, and Depredation and Waste of the publick Estate and Revenues of the Company and with great Oppression of the Colony in general as well as several private Men in particular and the Cries of his Outrages and Rapine at last became so loud and numerous and the Company in England so enraged at the Reports and Information they received that they could scarce be restrained from flying to the King, for the Redress of so many and so great Mischiefs. But Sir Thomas Smith,  

1 John Esten Cooke, Virginia, a History of the People, American Commonwealth series, p. 108 and p. 111.

2 Stith's history was published at Williamsburg, Va. I have not seen the original edition but have consulted the reprint, Joseph Sabine, N. Y., 1865. See Dict. of Nat'l Biography, L. Stephens, 1885, 2:78-80; article on Argall, by C. H. Coote, from which I quote: "Recent writers, misled by the apparent but injudicious impartiality of Stith, have hastily and aerimoniausly condemned Argall and all his works, in spite of contemporaneous evidence to the contrary which has never been gainsaid by the well known Captain John Smith and several others."

It is to be noted that the entry in the Council's minutes was made seven years after Argall left Virginia; several years after he was acquitted by the courts and several months after the surrender of the Virginia charter, an interesting example of early colonial mudslinging.
whether in Favour to Captain Argall, his kinsman, or out of his real Judgment, alleged, that imploring his Majesty's aid might prove prejudicial to the Company's power and of dangerous Consequences to their Liberties; and might also give Room to much publick Scandal and Reflection. And therefore he proposed a milder and less clamourous Way of Proceeding.”

Granted that Sir Samuel Argall has had hardly a fair hearing, it will be my purpose to show by reference to numerous documents that he does not deserve the full measure of condemnation that has been bestowed upon him. At a distance of some three centuries the task is somewhat involved. It will be interesting to see whither we are led.

A BIT OF FAMILY HISTORY

Samuel Argall was born about the year 1572, at Bristol, England, son of Richard Argall, of East Sutton, Kent, and Richard's second wife, Mary, daughter of Sir Reginald Scott, of Scott's Hall, Kent. Richard Argall was a military man of note, who had seen considerable service abroad, and Samuel's mother was descended from Sir Bryan Tuke, secretary of Cardinal Wolsey. Samuel's paternal grandparents were Thomas Argall, of St. Faith-the-Virgin, London, an officer of the court of Queen Elizabeth, and Margaret, daughter of John Tallakarne, of Cornwall.

The relationship between Argall and Sir Thomas Smith, sometime Treasurer of the Virginia Company, has led to the conclusion, that for family reasons, Argall was shielded by officers of the Company when certain charges were brought against him. That this relationship was not particularly close is shown by the fact that Sir Thomas Smith's uncle William married Mary, daughter of Laurence Washington, and that Laurence, after the death of his first wife, Martha Newce, married Argall's widowed mother, Mary Scott Argall.

Laurence Washington, Argall's step-father, was the great-uncle of the Reverend Laurence Washington whose son John settled in Virginia, the ancestor of General George Washington.

Anne Argall, daughter of Sir Samuel, married Alexander Bolling, grandson of Thomas Bolling, of Bolling Hall, Yorkshire. Robert Bolling, of Virginia, a descendant of Thomas of Yorkshire, married Jane Rolf, granddaughter of Poca-

1 Quoted from the Virginia Historical Magazine, 27: 40. In different documents, as well as in printed books, Sir Samuel's name is variously spelled; his own signature is plainly "Samuel Argall."
2 Visitations of Essex, 1612, 1: 137; also Brown, Genesis of the U. S., 2: 814.
hontas, thus forming a family connection between the Argalls and descendants of the daughter of Powhatan, including in later generations, many prominent Virginia families.

“A GOOD MARRINER AND A VERY CIVILL GENTLEMAN”

It is shown in the records of the Guild of Merchant Tailors that in the year 1609, Captain Samuel Argall, an “ingenious active and forward young gentleman,” was commissioned “for the Discoverie of a shorter way to Virginia and to avoid all danger of a quarrell with the subjects of the King of Spaine.”

On May 5, 1609, he accordingly set sail from Portsmouth, England, having been instructed “to shape his course free from the road of Pyratts,” also to attempt a “clear route passage by leaving the Canaries on the East, and from thence to run a straignt western course . . . to make experience of the winds and currents which have affrighted all undertakers by the North.”

The successful manner in which Argall executed this commission is learned from a statement of Gabriel Archer, one of the first lawyers in Virginia and recorder of Gosnold’s voyage to the Maine coast. Says Archer:

“When wee came to James Towne, we found a Ship which had bin there in the River a monthe before wee came; this was sent out from England by our Counsels leave and authority, to fish for Sturgeon, and to goe the ready way, without tracing through the Torrid Zoan, and she performed it: her Commander was Captaine Argoll (a good Marriner and a very civill Gentleman) and her master was one Robert Tindall.”

These were hard days for the struggling colony at Jamestown and in reference to them it is significant to read in a document written at the time, that “God having seen our misery sufficient sent Captaine Argal to fish for sturgeon, with a ship well furnished with wine and bisket; which though it was not sent us, such were our occasions we took it at a price; but left him sufficient to returne for England.”

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2 Purchase, His Pilgrims, ed. of 1906, 19: 3. In the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial series (1654-1660), p. 8, is this entry: Oct. 4, 1609. Capt. Argoll was found in an English ship riding at James Town. They heard all the Council were dead but Capt. (John) Smith.
4 Cf. Winsor’s Narrative and Critical History of America, 3: 134, and E. D. Neil, History of the Virginia Company of London, p. 30. “Captain Argall (a relative of Sir Thomas Smith) arrived at Jamestown in July with a ship load of wine and provisions, to trade on private account contrary to the regulations of the Company. As the settlers were suffering for food, they seized his supplies.”

See also A True and Sincere Declaration of the Purpose and Ends of the Virginia Plantation, etc., by John Stepneth, London, 1609, who states: “But so soon as Captaine Argoll arrived among them, whose presence and example gave new assurance of our Cares, and new life to their endeavors, by fishing onely in a few days, they were all recovered, growne hearty, able and ready to undertake every action. . . .” A copy of this book is in the Harvard College Library. See Brown’s reprint in Genesis of the U. S., 1: 338.
Argall returned to England at the close of the summer of 1609 with a large shipment of sturgeon, assuring himself before he took his departure that the colonists were supplied with food. In March, 1610, Lord De la Ware sailed from England for Virginia with a fleet of several vessels under the conduct of Captain Argall, carrying emigrants and supplies.

Their arrival was most opportune since Governor Gates had already ordered the colony abandoned, when one of his vessels, running down with the tide, met one of Lord De la Ware's ships, bearing letters to Gates with orders to return to Jamestown. These orders were obeyed and the Virginia colony was saved; but it should not be forgotten that Captain Samuel Argall was the navigator who brought assistance at one of the most crucial periods in American history.

Realizing that this relief was but temporary, Argall, in company with Sir George Somers, soon set out for Bermuda for supplies, but the two vessels after being blown far off their course by adverse winds and separated by violent storms, Argall was driven by gale and current far to the northward. He sailed and fished along the New England coast as far as Seal Rock, northeast of Matinicus Island, and of this trip he has left an interesting account, significant in the early history of Maine, since it antedates Captain John Smith's visit to Monhegan by some four years.

Of this trip to Sagadahoc, Strachey has recorded: "Argall made good from 44° north latitude, what Captayne Bartho. Gosnold and Captayne Weymouth wanted in their discoveries, observing all along the coast. and drawning plottes thereof, as he steered homeward unto Chesapeake Bay." Incidentally, it may be added that Captain John Smith afterwards made good use of these "plottes thereof" without acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Captain Argall.

Returning to Virginia, Argall carried on with the Indians some very profitable trading trips and on one occasion, when up the Potomac river, he made the discovery of mines of both antimony and tin. His most famous exploit, perhaps, but the

1 For a more extended account see Brown, First Republic in America, p. 126.
2 The complete title of Argall's own account is: The Voyage of Captaine Samuel Argal, from James Towne in Virginia, to seeke the Ile of Bermuda, and missing the same, his putting over toward Sagadahoc and Cape Cod, and so backe againe to James Towne, begun the nineteenth of June, 1610. The original manuscript was preserved by Hakluyt and published by Purchase, 1626, reprinted by Brown, Genesis of the U. S., 1: 428; by Houghton Mifflin in Sailors' Narratives of the N. E. Coast. See Purchase, ed. 1906, MacLehose, 19: 73.
3 Strachey, Hakluyt Society Publications, 2: 42.
4 It was on his way to Maine that Argall noted the Gulf Stream, for the sailors "in their watch did see a race and that ship did drive to the northward when she had not a breath of wind."
story is too well known to necessitate its repetition, was the capture of Pocahontas. It should be observed, however, that in this incident there is nothing to warrant the denunciation of the act as one of infamous treachery. As a direct result of the capture, peace with Powhatan was obtained, English prisoners were released and the struggling colony was relieved, for a time at least, of a lurking terror; something which, according to Sir Thomas Dale, could not have been accomplished even by two regiments of soldiers.¹

THE ADMIRAL OF VIRGINIA VISITS MOUNT DESERT

The missionary work among the French, undertaken simultaneously with settlement, was so associated with political and commercial interests, that the Virginia Company might well look with apprehension upon the contemplated activities of the Jesuits, of which it was informed when the Grace de Dieu with Fathers Biard and Massé on board, en route to Port Royal, was driven by stress of weather into Newport Harbor, Isle of Wight, in 1611.

As a result of this important information, the Trinity term of the Virginia Court, July 11, 1612, commissioned Captain Samuel Argall as Admiral of Virginia, with instructions to prevent the French from obtaining a foothold in North Virginia. Argall, therefore, sailed from England on August 12, 1612, in his ship the Treasurer, in which he was part owner with Sir Robert Rich, afterwards Earl of Warwick, and arrived at Point Comfort on September 27; spent the fall and winter in trading, fishing and exploring and in the spring made his preparations for the trip northward to Saint Croix and Port Royal.²

It was sometime in July, 1613, that Argall sailing northward, under orders from Sir Thomas Dale, happened to be in the Mount Desert region. Here he chanced upon the Jesuit settlement at Fernald’s Point, but recently removed by orders from the French sovereign, from Port Royal; made a furious attack upon the colony which should have been better defended, and after a short but sharp conflict, came off an easy

¹Calendar of State Papers, Colonial series (1554-1660), notes by Sir Joseph Williamson, p. 5: "In 1613 Capt. Argoll took prisoner the dear daughter of Powhatan, the King of the Indians."

²I returned to my ship, May 22, and haste[d] forward my business left in hand at my departure; and having fitted up my ship, and built my fishing boat, and made ready to take the first opportunity of the wind for my fishing voyage, of which I beseeched God of his mercy to bless us." Alexander Brown in his First Republic in America, p. 176, thus quotes, and adds that Argall "had been ordered to drive the French Jesuits from North Virginia, and he 'beseeched God of his mercy to bless' the effort which they were now ready to make in the execution of that order." From a letter to Nicholas Hawes, in Purchase, ed. of 1906, 19: 90.
victor. The colonists were removed and never again in Eastern Maine did the French make any serious attempt at colonization.

In a "New England Relation," printed in 1625, mention is made of the abandonment of the Popham colony at the mouth of the Kennebec and that "the Frenchmen immediately tooke the opportunity to settle themselves within our limits, which being heard by those of Virginia, that discreetly tooke to their consideration that the inconvenience that might arise, by suffering them to harbour there, dispatched Sir Samuel Argall, with Commission to displace them, which he performed with much discretion, judgment, valour, and dexterity. . . . And hereby hee hath made a way for the present hopefull Plantation to be made in Nova Scotia, which we heare his Majesty hath lately granted to Sir William Alexander Knight. . . ."

With reference to Popham's deserted fort on the Kennebec, there is a statement made by the Jesuit Father, Pierre Biard, in a letter to the Provincial, of date January 31, 1612, which makes it clear that one of the reasons which induced Biencourt, the commander of Port Royal, to undertake a trip to the westward, accompanied by Father Biard, was "in order to have news of the English, and to find out if it would be possible to obtain satisfaction from them" (si on pourroit avoir raison d'eux).

Noting certain inherent defects in the plan and defenses of the fort, the Frenchmen evidently concluded that it would be possible to get the better of the English, even if this fortification were well garrisoned; but they were reckoning without Captain Argall, to whom Father Biard was soon to have an introduction at Saint Sauveur.

Here at Mount Desert, even if the improvident commander, La Saussaye, in spite of the vehement protestations of the militant members of the colony, set up fruit trees instead of cannon, and laid out gardens rather than fortifications, had

1 Purchase, ed. 1906, 19: 271. Herein Mt. Desert is referred to as Mount Mansell, a name not destined to survive as applied to the island. Within a few years the eastern peak of Western Mountain has been named Mount Mansell, in honor of Sir Robert Mansell, Admiral of England, and grantee of Mount Mansell, 1621.

2 Afterwards first Earl of Stirling. An echo of this grant is to be found in the records of Sir Francis Bernard's attempts to obtain validation of the grant of Mount Desert, made to Bernard by the General Court of Massachusetts, 1762. When Charles I, at the instigation of his Queen, Henrietta Marie, gave Acadia back to France, the Earl of Stirling, to compensate him for the loss of Nova Scotia, was given the County of Canada, extending from the St. Croix to Pemaquid, together with other territory. Complications arising from these facts, prevented approval of the Bernard grant until 1771. See my Sir Francis Bernard and His Grant of Mount Desert, Publications of the Colonial Society of Mass., 24: 197.

listened to Captain Fleury, Lieutenant La Motte and the Jesuits, the English Captain Argall, in his strongly armed ship of some two hundred and fifty tons, with her complement of sixty fighting men, would have proved far too powerful.

Argall, by rescuing the grant of North Virginia from the French, most certainly got the better of a movement, which, as Alexander Brown has said, had it not been stopped in the beginning, it is interesting to think what might have been the history of this nation.

As sometimes related, the story of Argall’s dealings with the Jesuits at Mount Desert, leaves nothing to his credit. His stealing of La Saussaye’s commission when that chicken-hearted commander, at the first signs of trouble, discreetly took to the woods in the region of Valley Cove, was a senseless bit of villainy; his turning adrift in an open boat, well provisioned to be sure, of many colonists, seems, judged by modern standards, an inhuman act; but it is to be noted that upon the arrival in Virginia, with the remnant of the Saint Sauveur colony, when Marshall Dale threatened hanging, Argall came to the rescue, confessed his duplicity and zealously argued against any such proceedings.

Father Pierre Biard, Superior of Saint Sauveur, was perhaps the greatest sufferer as the result of Argall’s conquest, in body as well as in mind, and his estimation of a former enemy, written after he was safely back in Europe, is an encomium worthy of remark; for the Jesuit Father has said: “Certainly this Argall has shown himself such a person that we have reason to wish for him, that from now on, he may serve a better cause and one in which his nobility of heart may appear, not in the ruin, but in the preservation of honest men.”

Turning next to an English contemporary, let us note what Ralph Hamor, one time secretary of the Virginia Company, has to say of Admiral Argall at Mount Desert: “His Norward discoveries towards Sacadehoc, and beyond to Port Royal, Sancta Crux, and thereabout may not be concealed: In which his adventure if he had brought home no commodity to the colony (which yet he did very much both of apparrell, victualls, and many other necessaries) the honour which he hath done unto our Nation, by displanting the French there beginning to seat and fortefie within our limits, and taking of their Ship and Pinnas, which he brought to James Towne, which

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1 Jesuit Relations, Thwaite’s ed., 4: 79.
2 Original edition of Hamor was printed in London, 1615. Quotation is from the Burney reprint, Albany, J. Munsell, 1860.
THE WESTERN WAY AND OUTER ISLANDS

View from Sargent's Mountain, showing Argall's course in the Western Way, prior to his destruction of Saint Sauveur, the first French Jesuit mission in America, Mount Desert Island, 1613.
would have rewarded enough for his paines, and will ever speake loud his honour and approved valour."

In the investigation which followed the destruction of Saint Sauveur, Argall was vindicated. The average reader of early American history will, however, find but few references to this important detail. On the other hand many of the older histories speak of Captain Argall as a freebooter, pirate, buccaneer or marauder because he attacked the French at a time when England and France were at peace, ignoring two very important points to which attention may now be turned.

There is a clause in the Virginia Charter which conferred upon the colonies of both North and South Virginia the right "to encounter, expulse, repel and resist, as well by sea as by land," by all ways and means whatsoever, all and every such person and persons, as without especial license of the several said colonies and plantations, shall attempt to inhabit within the said several precincts and limits of the said several colonies and plantations, or any of them."

The second point is this: On July 11, 1612, at the Trinity term of the Virginia court, Captain Samuel Argall was commissioned as Admiral of Virginia and specially instructed to prevent the French from establishing colonies in North Virginia, and under this authority of the Virginia court, backed by the clause in the Virginia Charter, the French Jesuit settlement at Mount Desert was obliterated.

Dr. Burrage, in his Beginnings of Colonial Maine\(^1\) has ably discussed the Saint Sauveur episode in all its various phases and it is not here necessary to go further into detail, for the above mentioned facts are quite sufficient to show that Argall by carrying out instructions should not be anathematized as a pirate or marauder, but ought to be considered an English naval officer who, from the standpoint of British interests in America, performed an act at Mount Desert, the importance of which, in Colonial history, cannot be overestimated.

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\(^{1}\) See Dr. H. S. Burrage, Beginnings of Colonial Maine, p. 116.

Note. In Leslie Stephen's Dictionary of National Biography, in the article on Argall by C. H. Coote, is this reference to the Saint Sauveur investigation:

"Argall's dignified and judicious reply which completely silenced his adversaries and which has been strangely overlooked, is still preserved among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum, (Otto, E. 8: 29)."

Also in this connection see Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., 4th series, 9: 42 and note, 498. This attempted vindication of Argall at Mount Desert was discussed at a meeting of the Maine Hist. Soc. at York, Aug. 22, 1870, and was reported in the Boston Daily Advertiser, Aug. 31, 1870. Williamson's Bibliography, 1: 47. This is another item, "strangely overlooked" by writers, fairly recent.
DEPUTY-GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

Retained in the services of the Virginia Company, and for the next few years making his customary voyages to and from England, Argall's life seems to have been uneventful; a calm, as it were, before the stormy times that he was to experience as chief magistrate, when he "under a military code, ruled the colony with a rod of iron."

Of his administration as Deputy-Governor, to which office he was elected on November 30, 1616, it is quite impossible, from the material at hand, to form a fair estimate. "We might as well attempt," says Alexander Brown,¹ "to write the history of a city on the records of its police court as the history of a colony on such evidence as had its origin in some dispute, faction, or controversy."

However, a brief survey of the times can be made, and certain points, with reference to Argall, brought out which may make it appear that perhaps he was more sinned against than sinning; a victim of circumstances and of a system which had to give way before the march of progress and of political freedom. From a biographical standpoint, especially when opponents supply the material, it is unfortunate to be on the losing side.

It was in the year 1617 that "Captaine Yeardley returned for England, after the arrival of Captaine Argall, sent thither to be deputie Governour. Captaine Argall was sent in the George, and with Capt. Hamor his Vice-Admirall, in May, 1617, arrived at James Towne, where he found things in much disorder which he sought to redress." ²

In those disturbed times, which the governor of Virginia "sought to redress," it is little wonder that Argall was "no lover of the people he had come to govern." Here was a motley crowd of colonists, soldiers of fortune, bold exploiters, reckless adventurers, dregs of the London streets,³ with only here and there a gentleman of birth and culture, and the preservation of law and order was no simple matter, but rather one that required tact and patience; attributes which even in later days have been lacking in some gubernatorial incumbents.

On June 17, 1617, Argall wrote back to England that "he will use his best Endeavors on which he prays they'll put the best construction—desires Sir Dudley Diggs may sollicit

¹ First Republic in America, p. 241.
² Occurrents in Virginia, Purchase, ed. 1906, 18: 119.
³ There were felons and jailbirds in Virginia at this time who may, or may not have left descendants. That this fact is a controversial one is shown in the files of the Richmond, Va., Standard, Sept. 7, and Sept. 28, 1873, articles by R. A. Brock and by a correspondent signing himself "F. F. V."
Archbishop (of Canterbury) to give Mr. Wickham power to administer Sacrement here, being no other parson.”

Governor Argall is said to have fixed the percentage of profit on goods, but Governments more modern have, at times, done something savoring of this action; and in regulating the price of tobacco, there was inaugurated a price fixing schedule, not to be entirely forgotten by legislative powers in later years. That he should have been the first to advocate a tax on tobacco to help defray government expenses, may prejudice some against him; but, in truth it may be said, since imitation is the most sincere form of flattery,—that our own Government has in this matter, never failed to recognize in the Indian weed, a prolific source of revenue.

From time to time, adverse reports of Argall’s administration reached England, and a storm was gathering, to break soon after a ship, the Neptune, arrived in Virginia, bringing information “to the colony that great multitudes were preparing in England to be sent, and relied much upon that victual they should find there.” It is interesting to note that among these multitudes were the Leyden pilgrims, who, but for the disturbed state of affairs in Virginia and for an act of Governor Argall, might have found asylum there instead of on the shores of New England. Here again, those of speculative minds may figure as to what might have been the result upon future history, had the Mayflower cast anchor at Jamestown instead of at Plymouth.

Upon receipt of letters brought by the Neptune, Argall at once called a council in Virginia which sent word to the council in England, “telling them the state of the colonie,” mentioned the drought of 1618, with its resultant short crops, and pictured the misery that would result unless “they sent not provisions as well as people.”

To the Virginia Council in England, it appeared that Argall was trying to discourage immigration, and the members were angry that he should have written such a letter, “by which he so dispraised the country as to appear less fertile than the most barren arable land to be found ordinarily in the realm of England. An assured way of discontent to all adventurers and planters from further proceeding.”

2 Court Book of the Virginia Co., Washington, 1906, 2: 403. The original Court Book, in two volumes, is in the archives of the Congressional Library. Through the courtesy of Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick, chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library, I was permitted to examine these truly remarkable documents. That these, together with many other invaluable documents relating to the earliest history of this Nation have been preserved, is due entirely to the efforts of Thomas Jefferson. The Federal Government, in 1906, published the Court Book, copiously illustrated with many documents in facsimile. These is a copy of this work in the Islesford Collection.
Captain John Smith, who knew as much about Virginia as anybody, has stated in his history that Argall called attention to real needs, that “what they did suffer for was want of skilful husbandmen, and means to set their Ploughs on worke, having good ground as any man can desire, and about forty Bulls and oxen; but they wanted men to bring them to labour and Irons for the Ploughs, and harness for the cattle.”

But Argall’s recall was demanded by the Council and accordingly early in the year of 1619, the ship William and Thomas arrived in Virginia, bearing dispatches for Lord-Governor De la Ware and Deputy-Governor Argall. As Lord De la Ware had died en route to Virginia, both letters came to Argall’s hands.

Copies of both of these letters were read into the Court records, June 19, 1622. In that to Lord De la Ware mention is made of Argall’s “dayning to bee Deputy to any man,” and attention is called to his neglecting and transgressing our Commissions and Instructions,” closing with “you will cause him to be shipped home in this ship the William and Thomas to satisfy the Adventurers by answering such things as shall be layed to his charge and for yt wee suppose there will bee found many misdemeanours of his weh hee must make satisfaction to the Compagny wee pray your Lorpt (Lordship) to ceaze upon such goods of his as Tobacko and Furr, whereof it is reported he hath gotten together a greate stoare . . . .”

This letter is dated at London, August 23, 1618, and that to Argall bears the date of the day before; signed, after giving him severe reprimands and calling him to account, by “Your very loving friends, Thomas Smith, Lionell Cranfeild, John Dauer, John Wolstenholme and Robert Johnson.”

The next move of the Council in England, made against the protests of Lord Rich, was to proceed “on their course against Capt. Argall and by advice of the Counsell and a choyse Committee prepared divers Commissions to be sent with Sir George Yeardley for the proceedinge against the Captaine in Virginia.”

This action prompted Lord Rich and his friends “to dis­patch a Pinnace from Plymouth to fetch away Captaine Argall wth his goods & booty before the Arryvall of Sr George Yeard­ley & his Commissions.”

The pinnace, Eleanor, sent for this purpose, arrived in Virginia on April 16, 1619, and on or about April 20, Argall

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1 General History, reprint of London ed. of 1629, Richmond, Va., 1819, p. 35.
2 Court Book, 2: 51.
3 Id., 2: 404.
4 Id., 2: 404.
departed, forced out of an office for which he had lost all liking; for he had previously written that “he earnestly desired to give up his place.” That he was thus spirited away, has often been charged against him, and, therefore, a brief comment upon the incident should be made.

Under the charter of 1606, the Council was empowered to depose the Governor by a majority vote of its members, should there be just ground for so doing. In 1607, Wingfield was removed as Governor, refused a copy of the accusations which had been brought against him, and given no opportunity to reply. When asked to whom he would appeal, he said, “to the King,” but he was committed to prison by the colonists, lived in disgrace, and anxiously awaited a chance to return to England. Lord Rich and others may well have had the Wingfield case in mind when they sent the Eleanor to bring Argall back to England.

ARGALL FACES HIS ACCUSERS

Chief Justice Taft, writing of Bermuda, which was included within the bounds of Virginia by the charter of 1611-12 and also coexistent in settlement with that province, has said: “There were few governors whose administration ... was not full of discussion and conflict of authority. Few governors went out of office against whom suits at law for abuse of authority and false imprisonment were not brought as a reward of their administrations.”

Governor Argall was not undergoing anything out of the ordinary when he faced his accusers “in ye former parte of the year 1619.” It is on record that he insisted upon the strictest inquiry; and in the Court Book, under date of December 15, 1619, we may read that “upon his owne desire to answere to such Crymes as are imputed to him in the time of his Gouerment hath been sundry times summoned to meet the Counsell att Southampton house, where he was informed that the charges against him had been divided into three parts: 1: His Offences in matter of State; 2: The Depredacon and spoile of the publique wth other offences to the Company and Counecell, and 3: his oppression there of the Collony in general and sundry p(ar)ticular men.”

It was during one of those “sundry times” at Southampton house that Argall explained many of the charges referred to in the Council’s letter and four of the five “loving friends”

1 Philip A. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia, N. Y., 1910, 2: 304.
2 Mr. Taft’s article on Bermuda was published in the National Geographic Magazine, 1921.
3 Court Book, 2: 30.
who signed that document were satisfied. For failure to avenge the death of several Englishmen who had been murdered by the Indians a short time before his departure for England, Argall showed that the colony was "very slenderly provided with munition," a fact too true, for which the Governor was not to blame.

The Brewster case, so called, which was the outcome of a dispute between Argall and Edward Brewster, over the tenants and supplies which Lord De la Ware was bringing to Virginia when death took him, occupied the attention of the Council for some time and was afterwards passed upon by the Virginia Court. Brewster, who was in Lord De la Ware's employ, was tried by court martial, convicted and sentenced to death, October 25, 1618; but upon petition, the penalty was commuted to banishment from the colony, under oath not to return. 1

At a Council meeting, June 14, 1619, it was decided that Argall should not be held faulty in his trial of Brewster by martial law, since he had proceeded and followed the example of his predecessors; but that he did proceed unduely, since Brewster was guilty of no crime worthy of death. With this case in the Virginia Court, the decision of the Council was reversed; for after taking much testimony, a ruling was made, with one dissenting voice, May 23, 1620, that the Governor's proceedings against Brewster were unjust and unlawful and not warranted either in matter or form by the Laws of the Realm.

It was pointed out that the grant of the use of martial law in Virginia was expressly restrained to the cases of rebellion and mutiny only: that Brewster's disobedience and opposition to Argall was "not in his place of Government but by a matter of private variance."

At first sight it is a bit puzzling to understand the court's decision in this matter, for the "military code" had been employed by the other Governors before Argall's time, and the Council had upheld him, though this was not the law of England. Mr. Bruce 2 gives the explanation: "It was a desire

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1 In Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America, chapter on Virginia, 3: 142, there appears this statement: "For seizing one of the servants of the estate of Lord Delaware, on complaint of Edward Brewster, the son of the manager, Argall was arrested, and on the 15th day of October, 1618, tried and sentenced to death; but the penalty was commuted to perpetual banishment. He secretly stole away from the colony April the 9th, 1619, leaving Captain Nathaniel Powell in authority." This is certainly a curious commentary on the Brewster case, depicting Argall condemning himself to death, and under that sentence, serving for nearly six months as chief magistrate of Virginia. As an example of careless statements made with reference to Sir Samuel Argall, it is a gem.

2 Philip A. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia in the 17th Century, p. 464.
to uphold English law in the colony that led the Company in 1620, to pronounce judgment passed on Capt. Brewster by Argoll during his incumbency of the Governor's office illegal simply on the ground that it was not warranted by that Law."

In other words, Argall was of the old regime; his administration was the turning point in Colonial history, for up to the year 1619, a trial by martial law was considered in Virginia to be a perfectly proper method of procedure; in 1620 it was no longer to be tolerated.1

The Court Books of the Virginia Company contain much about Argall's administration as chief magistrate; from Widow Smalley's cows to the roving voyage of the ship Treasurer, to which attention will soon be turned. Everything, however, seems to be written in a manner which is prejudicial to Argall, and he and Sandys seem ever to be accusing each other of sharp practise, and angry words often passed between them.2

It is futile to delve further into these disputes occasioned by the removal of Argall, which caused a split among the members, fairly rending the Virginia Company itself. Factional feuds became the order of the day, soon reaching such a stage that "all their meetings and consultations seemed rather cockpits than courts," and the participants, so John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton, had "grown so violent as Guelfs and Gebellines were not more animated one against the other; and they seldom meet upon the Exchange, or in the streets, but they brabble and quarrel; so that, if that society be not dissolved the sooner or cast into a new

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1 There was much criticism of the harshness of the Virginia laws of this period, but Sir Thomas Smith, guiding spirit of the colony, declared that they were beneficial and necessary; in some cases "ad terrorum" and in others to be truly executed. Under Gates and De la Ware, the laws were not vigorously enforced, but under Dale and Argall they were put into operation, reinforced with a series of martial laws drawn from the code in use among the armies of the Netherlands. See Virginia under the Stuarts, by Thos. J. Wertenbaker, Princeton University Press, 1914, p. 23. This author states: "The Divine, Moral and Martial Laws, as they were called, undoubtedly brought good order in the colony, and aided in the establishment of prosperity, but they were ill suited for the government of free-born Englishmen. They were in open violation of the rights guaranteed to the settlers in their charters, and caused bitter discontent and resentment."

2 Mr. Wertenbaker in his Virginia under the Stuarts, p. 35, calls attention to the fact that it was during Argall's administration that the liberals, under the leadership of Sir Edwin Sandys, got control of the Company; that Sandys utilized the Company as an instrument for the propagation of his party's political tenets. As is well known, Sandys was eventually victorious, and by his work, representative government in Virginia was assured. Argall was a reactionary, a "standpatter," which accounts for Sandys' bitter attacks upon him seven years after he ceased to be Governor of Virginia.
mould, worse effects may follow than the whole business is worth."  

THE ROVING VOYAGE OF THE SHIP TREASURER

Of the two ships, early identified with Mount Desert history, the English Treasurer seems to have had a more varied career than the French Jonas, "Mayflower of the Jesuits" as Parkman called her. The two are mentioned, both in the diplomatic correspondence of the time and in the records of the Virginia Company, for they had met in combat at the mouth of Somes Sound in 1613.

Five years later the Treasurer was again figuring in the dispatches, this time between England and Spain; for before Argall left Virginia for England, this vessel had been "set forth by the Earl of Warwick and sent to Virginia on an old commission of hostility from the Duke of Savoy against the Spaniards, procured by some means or other and put into the hands of Captain Argall, the said Treasurer ... was set out on a roving voyage on the Spanish dominions in the West Indies."  

These are undoubtedly the facts of the case, although it was made to appear at the time that Argall had sent the Treasurer, under command of Captain Daniel Elfrith, on a trip to the Azores to procure supplies for the colony; but whatever her mission, she certainly captured a Spanish vessel, containing among the cargo, a number of negroes, some of whom were left at the Earl of Warwick's plantation at Bermuda, and the others brought to Virginia, where Captain Elfrith was but coldly received.

It was Samuel Argall, though, who was "vehemently complayned agaynst by Padre Maestro and the Spanish Secretaire then here (in London) for Piracie, agaynst the Kinge of Spaine's subjects in ye West Indies he no sooner came home from Virginia appeared an opposite by ye present Company who questioned him for divers misdemeanors, and amongst others for this; but the heate of the Spanish accusacon did presently cease."  

Though the Spanish agent was satisfied when the owners of the Treasurer disavowed her acts in the West Indies, many

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1 Calendar of State Papers (1554-1660), p. 51. "Last week the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cavendish fell so feul at a Virginia and Bermudas Court that the lie passed and repassed." In 1625 the Virginia colony was changed to a royal province, and little wonder. In the Calendar of State Papers, of date Oct. 20, 1623, among "the names of those who held up their hands to surrender the patent" that of "Sir Samuel Argoll" appears.


3 Id., p. 284.

members of the Virginia Company were not; and the much discussed case of this now notorious ship received a fresh impetus in June, 1620, when letters marked private were received from Sir George Yeardley who had succeeded Argall as Governor of Virginia. Yeardley wrote: "that there was constant report in Virginia and that not without many probabilityes that the ship (Treasurer) was gone to rob the King of Spayne’s subjects by seeking pillage in the West Indyes and that this was done by direction of my Lord of Warwick."  

It was Sir Edwin Sandys’ duty to place this correspondence before the Council, but before doing so, he “first blotted my Lord of Warwick’s name out of these letters and anything that might directle touch him and so left the information to rest wholly upon Cap. Argall.” 

Captain John Smith says nothing about this charge of piracy against the Treasurer, either in his Virginia or Bermuda history, or of her taking negroes to either colony, for this is all that he records: “about the last of August came a dutch man of warre that sold us twenty Negars.”

Nothing is to be gained by following the Argall case, which dragged along in the courts for some four years, finally ending in an acquittal, though Fiske has said: “the evidence against him seems to have reached the point of moral conviction, but not of legal certainty.”  

It is a minor point, but if Sir George Yeardley who succeeded Argall as Governor and instigated suit against him, which after a long, tedious course, came to naught, had believed his predecessor morally though not legally convicted of crime, it is difficult to understand why, as his family records show, his eldest son was named Argall, a name obtaining for three successive generations in the Yeardley family.”

THE CLOSE OF A TURBULENT CAREER

Before the Treasurer case had terminated in the courts, Argall was assigned to an important naval command under Sir Robert Mansell in Algeria. It is interesting to note in this expedition, the association of two men whose names are early identified with Mount Desert Island.

1Brown, First Republic, p. 211.  
3The term “Dutch man-of-war” seems to have been a somewhat euphemistic term for a pirate craft in early colonial days. Possibly Smith thus refers to the “roving voyage” of the Treasurer, shielding thereby the Earl of Warwick, though with a somewhat more delicate touch than that resorted to by Sandys.

4Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, 1:185.  
5Genesis of the U. S., 2:1065.
Upon his return from the Mediterranean, Argall was made a member of his Majesty's Council for New England, and on June 26, 1622, was knighted at Rochester, by King James, who two years later appointed him to serve on an important war council with Sir Robert Mansell, Sir Richard Hawkins, Sir Thomas Button, Sir Thomas Love and other noted gentlemen. In 1624, Argall's name was proposed as a candidate for Governor of Virginia, but Sir Francis West was elected. The minutes of the Council for New England, still preserved in the Public Record Office in London, show that Sir Samuel Argall was actively interested in colonization and that he was regular in his attendance at the meetings of the Council.

Midsummer of the year 1625 saw Sir Samuel, admiral of a fleet of twenty-eight sail, put out from Portsmouth on a cruise which netted many captures, valued at some hundred thousand pounds, while in October of the same year he commanded the flagship in a combined land and sea attack upon Cadiz.

Some years later, at a date not determined, he left the navy and retired to his country seat at Walthamstow, in the county of Essex, not far from Epping Forest, occupying the old manor which in 1553, came into the possession of his grandfather, Thomas Argall. Here in this quiet country place, far from the sea upon which he had experienced so many daring and exciting adventures, the declining years of his life were spent. The date of his death is not known, but that it was before June, 1641, is shown in a petition presented by his daughter to the House of Commons in that year, in which mention is made of her late father, Sir Samuel Argall, sometime Governor of Virginia.

CONCLUSION

This paper is the result of a keen desire on my part to know something more of the Englishman from Virginia who removed Madame de Guercheville's Jesuit colony from Fernald's Point, Mount Desert; something more than is to be found in books dealing with the period in which Argall lived.

For several decades I have dwelt during the summer months, in close proximity to the scene of Argall's encounter with the French; sailed again and again over the course which the Admiral of Virginia must have taken on his way to attack the settlement. I have often wandered over the grassy slopes of Saint Sauveur, so well described by the Jesuit Father, Pierre Biard, and after a refreshing draught from his spring, comfortably seated on the shore, soothed by a pipe or two of the fragrant weed upon which the Governor of Virginia was the first to impose a revenue tax, given way to the Spirit of the Past.
With the establishment of the Lafayette National Park which now includes nearly all of the mountain tops of Mount Desert Island, the story of this region is occasioning more and more interest; and while Argall's name is not to be found on any height or headland, though on early maps the Bay of Fundy is called Argall's Bay, I have concluded that the story of the first Englishman who landed on Mount Desert Island should be told from the Virginia records, and not based upon political prejudices as set forth in the minutes of the Virginia Council.

Argall may have been a bold, bad man, a veritable rogue among honest men, but all of the documents do not thus testify. The rewriting of history is a job for the trained historian, but anybody can collect and study records; and if my humble efforts should bring about a different reading of the life of Sir Samuel Argall, there will be some excuse for the writing of this brief biography.
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